

# Mental Health Response to Terror Attack on the Pentagon

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September 11, 2001



# September 11, 2001

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- 0800: DiLorenzo Health Clinic has 180 staff, no assigned mental health professionals
- 0930: Aircraft hits Pentagon
- First on Scene: Serendipitous Professionals and clinic staff
- 1030: WRAMC SMART Team mobilized
- 1600: Deployment of first shift

# Who We Serve



# Team Deployment

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- Outside Team: Firefighters, engineers, Law Enforcement, mortuary affairs, soldiers
- Inside Team: Those who escaped, survived, grieved
- Sheraton Team: Families of those killed or missing



# Team Deployment

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- 60+ mental Health Professionals and paraprofessionals on site within 12 hours
- 24/7 coverage with 12 hour shifts
- WRAMC tent outside, DiLorenzo inside
- Army & Air Force (local and deployed)

# Outside Team



# Outside Team

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- Practitioners assigned to units: Old Guard, Law Enforcement, Search & Rescue, Mortuary Affairs, EPA
- Roaming Red Cross carts
- Proactive vs reactive intervention
  - Recovery prep classes for Old Guard
  - Onsite presence at recovery area
  - Accompanied into recovery areas
  - Debriefings schedule every shift change
  - Decompression area



# Inside Team

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- Variety of Exposure Levels
- Variety of Responses
- CISM by Command Request
- Walk-In at Clinic
- CISM to displaced offices and off-site
- Complete Coverage Mission
- Saturation Point: 31 October

# Family Team

- Sheraton Crystal City
- Sequestered from Media
- Joint operation with Survivor Assistance Of
- Re-Deployed for 1-year Anniversary



Arlington, VA, September 21, 2001 -- A memorial dedicated to the victims of the Pentagon terrorist attack.

Photo by Jocelyn Augustino/ **FEMA News Photo**

# Ten Days After: 9/21





# Lessons Learned

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- Responses titrated by proximity and acquaintance with someone killed
- Lingering effects on those who already had significant life stresses
- Resilience of many military members
- Protective factor: Sense of purpose and direction in operations planning
- Flexibility and ingenuity of providers overcame challenges to coordination